

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“Out With The Old, In With The New”

Colossians 3:1-11
2004

Introduction

In chapter 3, Paul makes a transition from teaching spiritual truths and begins to teach the practical applications of what he has presented in chapters 1 & 2. BTW, he does the same thing in Romans 12:1 and Ephesians 4:1.

In essence, Paul is saying that our doctrine should impact our lifestyle. In light of the fact that we have been raised from the dead with Christ and have a new identity as believers with a new citizenship in His heavenly kingdom, our lifestyle should become radically altered to reflect our new life. God isn't interested in renovating your life – He wants to transform it!

Illustration:

London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior.

As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg told the prospective buyer that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage.

“Forget about the repairs,” the buyer said. “When I buy this place, I’m going to build something completely different. I don’t want the building; I want the site.

Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve our own lives are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball.

When we become God’s, our old life is over (2 Cor. 5:17). All he wants is the site and the permission to build. Our part is to look at the blue prints [God’s Word] and simply cooperate with His plan to create in us His divine image.

I The Believer's New Focus

- A. Set your **hearts** on things above [Verse 1b]
Set your hearts = Zeteo = “To seek after whole-heartedly”

Example: King David

Ps 27:4 “One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.”

1. Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God

Heb 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith ..”

Quote: Corrie Ten Boom

“Look around and be distressed. Look inside and be depressed. Look at Jesus and be at rest.”

B. Set your **minds** on things above [Verse 2a]

Set your minds = Phroneo = “To focus one’s mind and affections on”

Present, imperative tense = “Keep on setting your minds ...”

The choice:

Rom 8:5 “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”

Illustration: Focusing binoculars

Focus your spiritual life on the things above: Love heavenly things; study them; let your hearts be entirely engrossed by them. This requires a deliberate act on our part since our natural tendency is to focus on the temporal things of this life.

John MacArthur says,

"The believer's whole disposition should orient itself toward heaven, just as a compass needle orients itself toward the north." To be "preoccupied with heaven is to be preoccupied with the One who reigns there and His purposes, plans, provisions, and power. It is also to view the things, people, and events of this world through His eyes and with an eternal perspective. . . it is to allow our preoccupation with heaven to govern our earthly response." [MacArthur, COL p. 128]

1. Not on earthly things [Verse 2b-3]

1 John 2:15-17 “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

a. For you **died**

1st reason to live with a heavenly focus:

Our old life is over. We died to the old way of life!

Gal 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

2nd reason to live with a heavenly focus:

- b. For your life is now hidden with Christ in God
Hidden = Krupto = “To conceal by covering”
 As believers, our life is intrinsically bound to Christ’s who is intrinsically bound to God’s.
 John 14:19-20 “Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

- c. For (when Christ, who is your life, appears) you also will **appear** with him in glory: [Verse 3-4]

1. Our resurrected & glorified body

Phil 3:20-21 “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

2. Our sharing in Christ’s future glory

1 Peter 5:4 “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

II The Believer's New Responsibility

- A. [Therefore], Put to **death** whatever belongs to your earthly nature: [Verse 5]
Put to death = Nekroo = “To kill or destroy”

This is a very strong word requiring radical action. The selective list of sins that Paul is about to list deadly to a believer’s spiritual life and need to be dealt with severely because so much is at stake:

Rom 8:13 “For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

1. Sexual **immorality**

Sexual immorality = Porneia = “Fornication”

It is the origin of our English word, Pornography”

It refers to any sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

- 1 Thess 4:3-7 “It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God, and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”

Application:

You cannot ignore God's moral standards without paying a price:
 - Broken homes, broken trust, damaged children, aborted children, loss of respect, sexual disease, and destroyed testimony.
 And as bad as the human consequences can be, they are trivial in light of eternity, because the Bible repeatedly states that adulterers and the sexually immoral will not inherit the kingdom of God – 1 Cor 6:9-10; Eph 5:5; Rev 21:8; 22:15

2. Impurity

Impurity = Akatharsia = “Physical or moral uncleanness”

A reference to perverted forms of sex: homosexuality, incest, child abuse, etc.

Eph 5:3 “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.”

3. Lust

Lust = Pathos = “Erotic passions”

Lust is out of character for a citizen of God's kingdom because it treats people as objects for personal gratification rather than as people made in the image of God.

1 Thess 4:4-5 “.. that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God.”

Application: What promotes lust? It depends on the person ...

Sexual magazines, movies, TV, Internet, Macy's ads, etc.

God's advice: “Flee youthful lusts” 2 Tim 2:22

4. Evil desires

Evil desires = Epithumia = “A longing for what is forbidden”

It is exactly what Jesus had in mind when he said, “If a man looks after a woman and lusts after her in his heart (if he mentally plays over the picture of having sexual union with her), he has already committed adultery in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28)

1 Peter 1:14-16 “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

5. Greed, which is idolatry

Greed = Pleonexia = “An inappropriate desire for money or material things”

It is ultimately an expression of dissatisfaction with what God has given.

Luke 12:15 “Then [Jesus] said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his

possessions.”

- a. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming [Verse 6]
Wrath = Orge = “Justifiable vengeance” (Continuous present tense)
 God's wrath is not some irrational passion, but an expression of his settled hatred for sin.

Eph 5:6 “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.”

- b. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived [Verse 7]
 At one time, we too participated in these same sinful behaviors, but now as citizens of God's kingdom, these behaviors no longer reflect our new identity in Christ.

Eph 2:3 “All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”

- B. **Rid** yourselves of all such things as these: [Verse 8]

Rid = Apotithemi = “To cast off or put away” (Past, imperative tense)

1. Get rid of it - James 1:21
2. Put is aside - Rom 13:12
3. Throw it off - Heb 12:1

Heb 12:1 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

1. **Anger**

Anger = Orge = “Vengeance or wrath”

According to the Scripture, not all anger is sin. But the anger that Paul speaks of here is an ungodly expression of unchecked emotion that is marked by name-calling, insults, and violent behavior.

James 1:19-20 “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

2. **Rage**

Rage = Thumos = “To breath hard or flare one's nostrils”

When unchecked, anger can turn to rage and result in shattered relationships, physical abuse, police records and even prison time.

A moment of rage can destroy what it has taken a lifetime to build.

Prov 29:22 “An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.”

Application: How to overcome anger or rage:

1. Maintain a consistent devotional life
2. Learn the warning signs of anger (physical and emotional)
3. Take a few deep breaths, walk away, and pray
4. Get perspective. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you why you are angry.
5. Resolve the issue biblically as soon as possible.

3. **Malice**

Malice = Kakia = “Deep seated, hidden hatred that takes revenge in secret”
 Rage is manifested in outward anger while malice is anger manifested in passive aggression (manipulation, withdrawal, emotional punishment)

Prov 26:24 “A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit.”

4. Slander

Slander = Blasphemia = “False statements designed to damage another person’s reputation”

Prov 10:18 “He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.”

5. **Filthy** language from your lips

Filthy language = Aischrologia = “Vile conversation”

Swearing and coarse conversation are out of keeping with our new identity.

Eph 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

C. Do not lie to each other [Verse 9]

Lie = Pseudomai = “To intentionally deceive”

Lev 19:11 “Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.”

Eph 4:25 “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”

Lying (and exaggeration) is ultimately an evidence of a lack of trust in God:

1. To escape consequences
2. To promote ourselves
3. To meet needs that we fail to trust God for

1. Since you have **taken off** your old self

a. With its practices

Taken off = Apekduomai = “To wholly divest oneself, or to strip off”

Ephesians 4:22 “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful

desires.”

2. Since you have **put on** the new self [Verse 10]
Put on = Enduo = “To clothe one’s self” (A decisive, once and for all act)

Eph 4:24 “... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

- a. Which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator
Renewed = Anakainoo = “To renovate”
Knowledge = Epignosis = “A thorough knowledge or comprehension”
 Col 1:9-10 “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way ...”
 Rom 8:29 “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son ...”

III The Believer's New World View

Even as we are to lay aside the sinful acts of the old life, we are also to lay aside the prejudices of the old life. They have no place in the kingdom of God.

- A. There is no **Greek** or Jew [Verse 11a]
 Rom 10:12-13 “For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile -- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- B. There is no circumcised or uncircumcised [Verse 11b]
 Gal 5:6 “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”
- C. There is no barbarian or Scythian [Verse 11c]
 Cultural Barriers
Barbarian = Barbaros = “Those who are uneducated, unsophisticated, uncivilized, or unpolished in their manners.”
Scythian = Skuthes = “People considered to be a wild, savage race”
 Paul's point is that even the most backward and savage people groups are not excluded from the gospel and are invited into God’s kingdom in the same manner as anyone else – by simple faith in the finished work of Christ.
- D. There is no **slave** or free [Verse 11d]
 2 Cor 5:16-17 “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

1. But Christ is all and is **in** all

Col 2:9-10 “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”

Conclusion

How should we respond?

Unbeliever:

If you have never received Christ as your Savior, then you are by default, a citizen of the kingdom of this world which God is going to ultimately destroy. But if you want to be a citizen of God’s eternal kingdom, then you must:

1. Admit and repent of your sin - Ps 32:5
2. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins - John 3:16-19
3. Confess Him as your Savior and Lord - Romans 10:9-10
- Be baptized in obedience to God’s command - Acts 2:38

Suggested prayer:

“Dear Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner and have done wrong. Please forgive my sins. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and was raised from the dead. And now I surrender my life to you and acknowledge you as my Lord and King. Thank you for hearing my prayer and thank you for giving me new life in Christ!

Believer:

If you are a believer, you are already a citizen of God’s kingdom – and your life should give evidence of that heavenly citizenship.

If the Holy Spirit has put His finger on any of the sins mentioned in this passage, I want to encourage you to put it death – get rid of it! It isn’t in keeping with your high standing as a citizen of God’s kingdom.

But keep in mind, it’s not your job to attempt to renovate a condemned building – simply turn your life over to God and let Him finish the new work He has already started.